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For IMPROVED GAME

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IMPROVED GAME

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention includes apparatus, articles of manufacture and/or methods for a game that is playable by at least one player with a plurality of "cards" and involves the simulated sale of product for value.

[0002] It is believed that people have always and will always play games. Although there are many games available to people, it is believed there is always room for another good game. Thus, there is a need for a game having one or more of the following attributes, capabilities or features: is creative; is challenging to play; is simple to manufacture; is simple to play; can be adapted for any suitable playing medium or technology; can be played in any of a variety of places; reflects one or more cutting edge social, political or other pragmatic issue; is thought-provoking; is rewarding and/or fun to play.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Various embodiments of the present invention includes a game involving the simulated sale of product for value and accumulation of value from such simulated sale(s), the game being playable by a plurality of players with a plurality of cards. The game includes at least five types of cards. Each first type of card represents a player's ability to sell product for value, whereby a player must play at least one of the first type of cards to be able to simulate the sale of product. Each second type of card represents one or more simulated product having value and which may be the subject of a simulated sale by a player. Each third type of card represents one or more simulated depository for simulating the safekeeping of value obtained from the

simulated sale of product, whereby a player must play at least one of the third type of cards to simulate the accumulation of value from the simulated sale of product.

[0004] Each fourth type of card represents at least one simulated problem hindering at least one player's ability to simulate the sale of product, whereby when at least one of the fourth type of cards is played against a player, the player cannot simulate the sale of product. Each fifth type of card represents the removal of at least one such simulated problem, whereby a player can remove at least one simulated problem represented by at least one of the fourth type of card by playing at least one of the fifth type of cards.

[0005] In some embodiments, the present invention involves an article of manufacture useful for playing a game, the game involving the simulated sale of product for value and accumulation of value from such simulated sale(s), the game being playable by at least one player with numerous cards. Each of the SHOP cards represents a player's ability to sell product for value, whereby a player must play at least one SHOP card to be able to simulate the sale of product. Each of the PRODUCT cards represents one or more simulated product having value and which may be the subject of a simulated sale by a player. Each of the ACCOUNT cards represents one or more simulated depository for simulating the safekeeping of value obtained from the simulated sale of product, whereby a player must play at least one of the ACCOUNT cards to simulate the accumulation of value from the simulated sale of product.

[0006] Each of the PROBLEM cards represents at least one simulated problem hindering at least one player's ability to simulate the sale of product, whereby when at least one of the PROBLEM cards is played against a player, the player cannot simulate the sale of product. Each of the PROBLEM REMOVAL cards represents the removal of at least one simulated

problem represented by at least one of the PROBLEM cards, whereby a player can remove the at least one simulated problem represented by at least one of the PROBLEM cards by playing at least one of the PROBLEM REMOVAL cards.

[0007] The present invention may be embodied in a method for playing a card game involving the simulated sale of product for value and accumulation of value from such simulated sale(s). The game is playable by at least one player with at least first, second, third, fourth and fifth types of cards. This embodiment includes at least one player displaying at least one of the first type of cards to qualify for simulating the sale of product and displaying at least one among the second type of cards to simulate the offering of product for sale. The at least one player displays at least one among the third type of cards to simulate the establishment of a depository for safekeeping any simulated value obtained from the simulated sale of product by such at least one player. At least one player may have at least one among the fourth type of cards played against him to simulate the existence of at least one problem preventing him from simulating the sale of product. The at least one other player may play at least one among the fifth type of cards to remove at least one simulated problem represented by at least one among the fourth type of cards played against such at least one other player and enable the at least one other player to simulate the sale of product.

[0008] In many embodiments, the present invention involves a method for playing a game by at least one player with a deck of game cards including, without limitation, pluralities of SHOP, PRODUCT, ACCOUNT, PROBLEM and PROBLEM REMOVAL cards. Each of the PRODUCT and ACCOUNT cards indicates a value thereof respectively. The game simulates the accumulation of value by each player from the simulated sale of at least one type of product. A

score is maintained for each player. The method includes dealing a plurality of game cards to each player from the card deck and each player repeatedly taking turns until a player wins the game, each turn of each player including one among a plurality of moves. The plurality of moves includes, without limitation, discarding a game card and drawing a game card from the card deck and establishing a SHOP stack with a SHOP card. After establishing a SHOP stack, a player may place at least one PRODUCT card onto the player's SHOP stack. After establishing a SHOP stack, a player may establish an ACCOUNT stack with an ACCOUNT card. After establishing a SHOP stack and an ACCOUNT stack, a player may move at least one PRODUCT card from a SHOP stack to an ACCOUNT stack of the player to simulate the receipt of value from the sale of product represented by the at least one PRODUCT card. When the cumulative value of the PRODUCT cards on a player's ACCOUNT stack equals the value of such ACCOUNT card, the player may add the value of the ACCOUNT card of such player's ACCOUNT stack to his score.

[0009] Accordingly, the present invention includes features and advantages which are believed to enable it to advance game technology. Characteristics and advantages of the present invention described above and additional features and benefits will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art upon consideration of the following detailed description of preferred embodiments.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

[00010] Presently preferred embodiments of the invention are described in detail below. It should be understood that the description herein is of preferred embodiments and is not intended to limit the invention or the appended claims. On the contrary, the intention is to cover

all modifications, equivalents, and alternatives falling within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

[00011] As used in this patent (including the headings), the terms "invention", "present invention" and variations thereof are not intended to mean the invention of every possible embodiment of the invention or any particular patent claim or claims. Thus, the subject or topic of each such reference is not necessarily part of or required by any particular claim(s) merely because of such reference.

[00012] The game of the present invention is played by one or more player. The player(s) can be male, female, a combination thereof, a computer, robot or other machine, a simulated creature of any type, or any other desired type of being, object or concept. For the purpose of simplicity and clarity, a player may sometimes be referred to herein as "he", "him" or variations thereof. Offense should not be taken to such reference by women or anyone else. The nature, type and/or disposition of the players is in no way limiting upon the present invention.

[00013] The object of the game of the present invention is to be the first player to accumulate a certain simulated *value* from the simulated sale of *product*. The value may be represented by any quantifiable valuation method. For example, the value may be reflected in quantities of money in denominations of any past, present or future type of currency. The product can be any one or more good, service, anything else, or a combination thereof. A few examples of products are jewels, art, artifacts and providing smuggling services. The present invention is thus not limited by the nature or type of simulated value or product. For illustrative purposes, in the exemplary embodiment as described below, the product is drugs and a player must secure a value of \$1,000,000 (one-million U.S. dollars) to win the game.

[00014] The game of the present invention will now be described with reference to an exemplary embodiment. In the exemplary embodiment, the game is described as being played with conventional playing-type cards sometimes arranged in “stacks”. However, the present invention is not limited to playing with conventional playing-type cards arranged in stacks, but can be played with electronic representations or imagery or in any other manner, so long as the purpose, or action, represented by the card(s) as described below is incorporated. For example, the cards may be images created or shown on a device, such as a screen, computer, cellphone, watch, pager, palm pilot or other hand-held device, other electronic device or virtually any other type of equipment, and may not be arranged in stacks. In other embodiments, the cards may be imagined or believed to exist in a dimension not yet discovered by humans. Thus, the medium within which the purpose of the card(s) is represented or incorporated is not limiting upon the present invention. Accordingly, the term “card” and variations thereof as used in this patent means any medium or manner of communicating or representing one or more purpose or action as described below.

[00015] In the exemplary embodiment, to begin playing a round of the game, cards are dealt. For example, the cards may be shuffled and dealt face down, one at a time to the players in a clockwise order. If there are two, three or four players in the game, nine cards are dealt to each player. For more than four players, seven cards are dealt to each player. In this embodiment, after the cards are dealt, it is to the benefit of each player to keep the cards in his hand private so no other players can see them. However, the cards need not necessarily be dealt and retained in the above manner; any other suitable number of cards may be dealt to and retained by each player in any manner.

[00016] For illustrative purposes, the cards used in the exemplary embodiment will each be identified herein by a particular name or names. It should be understood that the invention is not limited to the particular names of cards provided -- these names are only examples. Any other card names may be used, so long as the cards are used for the same purposes or actions as described below. Further, the cards of the game can have any shape, color, form, configuration, and can bear any desired text and/or design elements.

[00017] Still with respect to the exemplary embodiment, the remainder of the deck is preferably placed in a stack face down (the "remaining deck"). Later, a discard pile (preferably also face down) and other stacks will be created, as described below. Thus, a playing surface may be desired or necessary for placing and maintaining the various stacks and piles. The playing surface can be anything, such as one or more table or chair, a vehicle hood or dashboard, one or more persons' back or stomach, the players' hands or anything else as desired. Whether a playing surface is used and, if so, the type of playing surface, are not limiting upon the present invention.

[00018] During the playing of the game, players take individual turns. In the exemplary embodiment, at the beginning and end of each turn, each player must possess the originally dealt number of cards in his hand. Thus, in this embodiment, whenever a player removes, plays or discards a card from his hand during the game, such as described below, the player must draw another card from the remaining deck (before any other player draws a card from the remaining deck).

[00019] In the preferred embodiment, if a player initially dealt the cards, the player to his immediate left begins play. Thereafter, each player takes a turn going in the clockwise

direction, unless something occurs to cause a player to skip a turn or change the direction of play, such as described below. However, this sequencing is not required by the present invention.

[00020] The present invention involves numerous actions or moves used by players to try to eventually win the game. In the exemplary embodiment, some moves that may be included are represented by the following cards:

[00021] 1. The purpose of a SHOP card is to signify that a player is a (simulated) seller of product. A player must play a SHOP card to sell product and earn value therefrom. In the exemplary embodiment, the SHOP card is a SET UP SHOP card.

[00022] 2. The purpose of a PRODUCT card is to represent a quantity of (simulated) product that can be sold for a specific value. In the exemplary embodiment, the PRODUCT cards are DRUG cards. Each DRUG card has a dollar value for the drugs represented by the card. If desired, the value, type of drug and/or other information may be included on the face of the DRUG card.

[00023] 3. The purpose of an ACCOUNT card is to represent a (simulated) depository for accumulating value received by a player from his sale of product. A player must play an ACCOUNT card to secure money from the sale of product. In the exemplary embodiment, the ACCOUNT cards are OFFSHORE BANK ACCOUNT cards and/or PUT UP cards (sometimes referred to herein individually or collectively as "OBA" cards), each of which represents an offshore bank account for holding money earned from the sale of drugs. Each OBA card of this embodiment indicates a precise dollar amount of money that can be held in such account.

[00024] 4. The purpose of a PROBLEM card is to represent at least one (simulated) problem hindering a player's ability to sell product. Generally, one player plays a PROBLEM card against another player to hinder the other player's ability to simulate the sale of product. In the exemplary embodiment, the PROBLEM cards are HATER cards. A HATER card may, for example, represent that the player against whom the card is played is being watched by or in trouble with one or more of the ATF, DEA, FBI, the police, Interpole, etc.

[00025] 5. The purpose of a PROBLEM REMOVAL card is to simulate the removal of one or more problem hindering a player's ability to sell product. Generally, a player must play a PROBLEM REMOVAL card to be able to remove a PROBLEM card played against him. In the exemplary embodiment, PROBLEM REMOVAL cards may, for example, be ATTORNEY, MAFIA and/or UNTOUCHABLE cards.

[00026] In the preferred embodiment, during the conduct of the game, cards are obtained by a player from his initial (dealt) hand, or by discarding a card from his hand to the discard pile and drawing a new card from the remaining deck. If desired, cards can also be obtained by the trading of cards between players. In the exemplary embodiment, any two or more players may, by agreement, trade or exchange any type or quantity of cards from their hands at any time during the game. Cards may be traded during a trading player's turn, in the midst of another player's turn or between any players' turns. The trading of cards does not employ a turn for any player. For example, one player may give another player a DRUG card with drugs valued at \$50,000.00 during his first turn in the game in exchange for a SET UP SHOP card from the other player. However, in the exemplary embodiment, players can bluff a trade or lie about the nature of the card(s) being traded. If a bluff or lie is made and at least one

card is exchanged or accepted, the trade is good and cannot be reversed, except by agreement of the trading players. Further, the trading of cards is not required by the present invention.

[00027] If desired, the game may include the “no wait” rule. Under the “no wait” rule, the game waits for nobody. For example, if one player has to use the bathroom, another obligation or even an emergency, the other players do not need to stop the game and wait. In such case, the game continues and the absent player’s turns are skipped.

[00028] Also, if desired, the game may include the “rule change” rule. Under this rule, the players may modify any of the rules of the game, or add or remove rules by unanimous agreement of the players. The players may even agree to change this “rule change” rule to have certain limitations on the changing of rules (e.g.: majority consent for a rule change, not allowing certain rules to be changed, etc.).

[00029] One example of the playing of the game of the preferred embodiment will now be described. To be able to “sell” product, each player must establish a “shop” by playing a SHOP card. In this particular embodiment, a shop is established by placing a SET UP SHOP card face up on the playing surface to create a SHOP, or SET UP SHOP, stack of that player. In some embodiments, a player can have more than one SHOP stack; however, portions of the following description may need to be modified for such embodiments.

[00030] In any subsequent turns after a player has a SHOP stack, the player simulates the offering of product for sale by placing a single PRODUCT (e.g. DRUG) card atop his SHOP stack. Numerous DRUG cards may be accumulated on a player’s SHOP stack. The DRUG cards on a player’s SHOP stack signify that the player has the product represented by the DRUG card(s) for sale.

[00031] After a player has a SHOP stack with at least one PRODUCT card, he may establish one or more account for accumulating money from the sale of product. In the preferred embodiment, this is done by placing an OBA card face up on the playing surface separate from all other cards, stacks and piles, creating an ACCOUNT stack. In this embodiment, the account represented by an OBA card will not hold any more money than the amount specified on the OBA card. Each player can have any number of ACCOUNT stacks.

[00032] After an ACCOUNT stack is created, value from the sale of product may be accumulated in the account represented by the ACCOUNT stack. In the preferred embodiment, this is done by a player moving one or more DRUG card from his SHOP stack to the ACCOUNT stack. The DRUG card(s) may be so moved during the same turn as when establishing the ACCOUNT stack and on later turns. When done on later turns, this move will employ the turn of the player. Any number of DRUG cards can be moved to an ACCOUNT stack during a single turn. In this embodiment, the value represented by the DRUG card(s) placed on an ACCOUNT stack is safe and cannot generally be affected by another player.

[00033] When the total dollar value indicated on all DRUG cards located on an ACCOUNT stack equals the corresponding OBA card value, the account is maxed-out. During the turn when the player moves the last DRUG card(s) to the ACCOUNT stack to max-out the ACCOUNT stack or on a later turn, the player may move all cards in the ACCOUNT stack to the discard pile and adds the dollar value of the OBA card to the player's recorded score. As indicated earlier, when a single player has a score of the proscribed winning amount (e.g. \$1,000,000 in the illustrated embodiment), he is the winner and the game is over.

[00034] Still referring to an exemplary method of playing an embodiment of the present invention, regardless of whether a player has a SHOP stack (unless a rule or action dictates otherwise), the player may (i) discard a card and draw a new card from the remaining deck or (ii) play a PROBLEM card against another player who has a SHOP stack. In this embodiment, a player may play a PROBLEM card by placing a single HATER card from his possession onto the SET UP SHOP stack of another player (the "receiving" player). This employs a turn of the player who played the HATER card (the "playing" player). Any number of HATER cards may be accumulated on any player's SHOP stack.

[00035] When one or more HATER card is included on a player's SHOP stack, the player's "shop" is effectively frozen. In such instance, DRUG cards cannot be added to that SHOP stack or moved from that SHOP stack to an ACCOUNT stack. Further, the receiving player can neither establish any new accounts with OBA cards nor close-out any OBA's, but can play HATER cards against other players as described above.

[00036] A PROBLEM card is removable by a player from his SHOP stack with the use of a PROBLEM REMOVAL card. In the exemplary embodiment, the PROBLEM REMOVAL cards include ATTORNEY, MAFIA and UNTOUCHABLE cards. An ATTORNEY card can be used to remove one HATER card from a player's SHOP stack. In a turn by the player, the ATTORNEY card is shown, a single HATER card is removed from the player's SHOP stack and both cards are placed on the discard pile. A MAFIA card may be used to remove all HATER cards from a SHOP stack. The MAFIA card is shown by the player, all HATER cards are removed from the player's SHOP stack, and the MAFIA and HATER cards are placed on the discard pile. This employs a turn for the player.

[00037] An UNTOUCHABLE card has the same effect and requires the same procedure as a MAFIA card, but also allows the player using the card to (i) take all DRUG cards from every other player's SHOP stack that does not include any HATER cards, and (ii) take the next turn in the game. When an UNTOUCHABLE card is played, the player shows the card, removes all HATER cards from his SHOP stack and places the UNTOUCHABLE and HATER card(s) on the discard pile. The player then takes all DRUG cards from each other player's SHOP stack (that does not have any HATER cards), and places them onto his SHOP stack. The player then takes another turn.

[00038] The game may include any other actions or moves, as desired. Some examples of additional moves that may be included are described below in the context of additional cards:

[00039] 1. A JACK MOVE card allows a player to take all DRUG cards from another single player's SHOP stack that does not have any HATER cards. In a turn, the player shows the JACK MOVE card, places it on the discard pile and moves all DRUG cards from one other player's SHOP stack (that does not have any HATER cards) onto his SHOP stack.

[00040] 2. A REVERSE DIRECTION (e.g. PUFF PUFF PASS) card allows a player to reverse the direction of play and take another turn. The player shows the card, places it on the discard pile and takes another turn, followed by the next player in the new direction of play, and so on.

[00041] 3. A NO JOKER COUNTY TIME card can be used to force another player to skip his next turn. In a turn, the player places the NO JOKER COUNTY TIME card on

another player's SHOP stack. At that player's next turn, his only move is to remove NO JOKER COUNTY TIME card to the discard pile.

[00042] 4. The playing of a HAND OVER (e.g. CITY SWEEP or OUT THE GAME) card ends the current hand of the game. When this card is played by being shown by a player on his turn, the value of all DRUG cards on each player's SHOP stack(s) is *deducted* from that player's respective recorded score, while the value of all DRUG cards in each player's ACCOUNT stack(s) is added to the players' respective recorded scores. All cards are returned to the deck and reshuffled, and a new hand is dealt. The player that played the HAND OVER card begins the next hand.

[00043] 5. When a HAND OVER card is played by a player, any player holding a PROTECTION (e.g. MADE MAN, GODFATHER or DON) card does not have to reduce his score by the value of the DRUG cards in his SHOP stack(s).

[00044] 6. A GAMBLER card can be placed by a player on another player's SHOP stack as a turn. If the receiving player moves one or more DRUG cards having a cumulative value equal to the value indicated on the GAMBLER card to an ACCOUNT stack during any of the next three turns of the receiving player, the receiving player's recorded score is increased by twice the amount of the GAMBLER card and the recorded score of the playing player is reduced by the amount indicated on the GAMBLER card. If not, the recorded score of the player who played the GAMBLER card is increased by the amount on the GAMBLER card and the receiving player's recorded score is reduced by that amount. Thereafter, the GAMBLER card is discarded to the discard pile.

[00045] 7. A PAY OFF (e.g. MUSCLE, GANG or DIRTY COP) card may be played by a player as a turn by placing it on another player's SHOP stack. Thereafter, during each turn of the receiving player, the value designated on the PAY OFF card (e.g. \$2,500) must be deducted from the receiving player's recorded score until the hand or game ends.

[00046] 8. A ONE TIME PAY OFF (e.g. BABY MAMA DRAMA or EX-WIFE) card may be played by a player as a turn by showing it to another player then discarding it to the discard pile. The receiving party's recorded score is reduced by the amount designated on the card (e.g., \$25,000).

[00047] 9. A BANK JOB card may be played by a player as a move by showing it and increasing his recorded score by the value indicated thereon (e.g., \$50,000) and discarding it.

[00048] 10. A HACKER card may be played by a player as a turn by showing it to another player then discarding it. The playing player's recorded score is increased and the receiving player's recorded score is decreased by the amount designated on the HACKER card (e.g. \$150,000).

[00049] 11. A JAIL (e.g. TWENTY-TO-LIFE) card may be played by a player as a turn by showing it to another player then discarding it. The receiving player is removed from the game and all his cards are placed on the discard pile.

[00050] 12. A PROSTITUTE or HOE card may be played by a player by placing it on another player's SHOP stack. During every subsequent turn of the receiving player, the playing player's recorded score is increased by a certain amount (e.g. \$2,000). The receiving player may remove the PROSTITUTE or HOE card from his SHOP stack during a turn by playing a PIMP card. The PIMP card is placed on the discard pile, and the PROSTITUTE or HOE card

may be placed onto the SHOP stack of any other player or discarded. If placed on the SHOP stack of another player, during every subsequent turn of the now-receiving player, the now-playing player's recorded score is increased by a designated amount (e.g. \$2,000), and so on.

[00051] Preferred embodiments of the present invention thus offer advantages over the prior art and are well adapted to carry out one or more of the objects of the invention. It should be understood that all of the above cards and any other cards that may be included may have any desired form, size, material construction, configuration and quantity, as is or becomes known. The present invention is in no way limited to the features, actions, cards, specific examples or other details described above. Further, the above-described features are not limited to the details as described and shown. Yet further, each such feature can be used independent of any other feature. Moreover, the present invention does not require each of the above features and includes further capabilities, actions, functions, methods, uses and applications, as will be apparent to a person skilled in the art based upon the description above and the appended claims.

[00052] While preferred embodiments of this invention have been described, many variations, modifications and/or changes are possible, contemplated by the patentee, within the scope of the appended claims, and may be made and used by one of ordinary skill in the art without departing from the spirit or teachings of the invention and scope of appended claims. Thus, all matter herein set forth should be interpreted as illustrative and not limiting. Accordingly, the scope of the invention and the appended claims is not limited to the embodiments described herein.